

ROANOKE ISLAND COMMISSION MEETING

Call to Order

The **Roanoke Island Commission** met in the Art Gallery on Friday, **October 26, 2012** at 9:00 AM. Officers present: Ellen Newbold, Chair and Treasurer; and Angel Khoury (by phone at 9:30AM), Secretary. Members present: Betsy Brown; Eddy Browning (late arrival); Ken Daidone; Zene Fearing; Jerry Jennings, DOT Designee; Warren Judge, Dare County representative; Grayson Kelley, Attorney General Designee; Brent Lane; Heidi Leo (late arrival); Robert Long; Lars Nance, NC Department of Justice; Fountain Odom; Billy Parker; Bob Partridge (late arrival); Dale Petty; Agnes Powell; Bob Quinn; John Robbins; Perry White and Earl Willis. Also present: Dr. Kevin Cherry, Deputy Secretary, Archives and History, NCDCCR; Karen Blum, Attorney General's Office, NCDCCR; Becky Breiholz, Town Clerk, Town of Manteo (early departure); Tod Clissold, Friends of *Elizabeth II*, Inc. Board Chair (early departure); Debbie Gibbs, Friends of *Elizabeth II*, Inc. Operations Director; Staff present: Kim Sawyer, Executive Director; and Amy Hinnant, Operations Manager.

Introductions

Welcome

Chairman Newbold welcomed all in attendance.

Oath of Office of Commissioners

Lars Nance

Lars Nance from the North Carolina Department of Justice officiated in the Oath of Office.

- Formal tradition in the State of NC; prior actions before the oath are not invalid.
- Town Clerk for the Town of Manteo Becky Breiholz read through the oath to swear in members.

Members stood and took the oath/affirmation of office. Ms. Breiholz notarized signatures afterward on members' written documents (oaths/affirmations filed as an attachment in the official Report Book).

Ethics Statement Conflict of Interest

Ethics Liaison/RIC Chairman Ellen Newbold read the ethics statement and inquired of Commission members as to whether they had any known conflict of interest or appearance of conflict with respect to any matters coming before the Commission today. None were noted.

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted by consensus.

Approval of Minutes April 27, 2012

On motion by Earl Willis and second by Warren Judge the minutes of April 27, 2012 were approved by unanimous vote.

July 27, 2012 (special called)

On motion by Fountain Odom and second by Zene Fearing the minutes of July 27, 2012 (special called) were approved by unanimous vote.

October 2, 2012 (special called)

On motion by Warren Judge and second by Zene Fearing the minutes of October 2, 2012 (special called) were approved by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report Amy Hinnant

Monthly certified reports from DCR have not been received since July 31, 2012. Effective July 1, 2012 the General Assembly mandated DCR to create a non-reverting Enterprise Fund for RIFP. The Historic Roanoke Island Fund was established. The DCR is in the process of setting up the accounts and combining all our funds together; our operating fund; state endowment and the performing arts fund into the Historic Roanoke Island Fund.

After accounts payable from 2011/12 (last F/Y) the Commission approved budget has been implemented. The beginning balance for our total fund, the Historic Roanoke Island Fund, is \$3,600,484.40.

- We do not have a completed report to date from DCR. The last report we received was as of July 31, 2012 which was on our previous funds.
- RIFP has received interest on the funds for July, August and September.
- We do receive weekly reports that are verifying the bills are being paid and that the income is being credited.

**Committee/Staff
Reports**
Executive Director

RIC Executive Director Kim Sawyer provided the Executive Director's Report as follows: With the ship being out and preparing for the upcoming storm, I will be doing all the staff reports today.

- Elizabeth II is in Washington, NC, as we speak, on the Washington waterfront for the "Smoke on the Water" event. It is the official NC barbecue cook-off.
 - Captain Robbie was interviewed three times by WITN.
 - The ship will be open for school groups beginning this morning at 8:30 AM.
 - Thanks to the Friends of Elizabeth II for sponsoring the outreach sail.
 - Great advertisement for Festival Park. We are handing out discount coupons for the park and also the museum store. Thanks to all our staff and to Debbie Gibbs who put in a lot of effort to help make it happen.
- Preparations for the upcoming storm, Sandy, are underway.
 - Thank you Warren Judge and Dare County for the continuing updates from Emergency Management.
 - We are preparing by taking some banners down; anticipating some stronger winds than usual.
- We have all new Committee Chairs except Ellen who still remains as the Finance Chair. Thank you all for agreeing to serve as Chairs. We feel like we do important work at the Committee level and I look forward to working with all of you.
- Five Year Plan Update. As a follow-up from our Special Called meeting: After that meeting I was charged with contracting Schultz and Williams as our Consultant to fulfill the mandate by the NC General Assembly that we provide them by February 1, 2013 a 5-Year Plan and also include in that some discussion and evaluation of privatization. Ellen will talk a little more about that at a committee report level. We have had one meeting with the consultant and Ellen will follow up with more information.
- We are working on the following reports:
 - We are required to report to the General Assembly four times a year. It's a written report. One was done in August and will be completing another in October. The report includes the actions that you take as Commissioners and where we are at the time of the report financially.
 - Transition Report. This is a report that happens every time a new administration is coming into the state. All state agencies are required to do so. We are participating in that as well.
 - A biannual report for North Carolina Cultural Resources. It is a "where we are now" from "where we were then" report.
- Enhancement Project
 - R&R (Repair and Renovation) funds received from the state in 2006/2007 is being used to fund the American Indian Town; Upgrade the Arrival Center and

the Adventure Museum and wayfinding. The American Indian town was completed. The majority of the funds went into American Indian Town. You may recall the Commission made the decision to change the contractor after Indian Town was completed. We did so. Our previous chairman assigned an Advisory Committee. The members of the Committee are John Wilson, Robert Long, Malcolm Fearing, and Saint Basnight. Saint Basnight chaired the Facilities and Land Committee and that was where this advisory committee sat.

- Thanks go to John and Robert. They have come to all the Advisory meetings. They were here and helped build this great facility that we have. We have great things to build upon. They remind us of the things we need to look out for.
- Our goals are in keeping the main large pieces. In the Adventure Museum the ship that is in there will remain and will be repainted to look like the Elizabeth II. It has a different façade right now. The lighthouse will remain. The duck blind is going to get fixed. It hasn't worked since I've been here but people still like getting in the duck blind; taking the gun and taking a shot. We are taking out the Algonquian Indian section. We will still have some information about Algonquian Indians. We are going to have more of a tribute to the other Voyages the Elizabeth II took.
- We are also doing a Living by the Sea. We already have ships in there but we are updating that a bit. We are going to be including some Aycock Brown photos and also some Outer Banks Catch photos and videos that we have.
- A couple of years ago the Museum of History had the John White drawings. They had a "What happened to the lost colony interactive". We are going to reenact that.

Robert Partridge and Eddy Browning joined the meeting at 9:30 AM.

Angel Khoury joined the meeting by phone at 9:30 AM

- Our goal is to have as much interactive video screens as possible. We want to be as modernized as we can.
- We are also upgrading our wayfinding to include the Museum Store and maps.
- Our Arrival Center is going to be renamed "Ticket Sales". We are creating more signage and maps inside the ticket area.
- In the full committee for Land and Facilities we discussed at the entrance to potentially block off an area so everyone had to walk through the sales area. Then direct them through to either purchase a ticket or go to the Museum Store. We decided to block off that area somewhat. It will still be open enough so people who want to walk through to the Museum Store can do so; or use the bathrooms.
- Our goal is that construction will begin in January/February and that it will be ready by March.
- In the Grand Mall we are removing the ship façade that was in there. It will be more of an open area. As you look at one of the renderings you will see we are going to have some more visuals. When you walk into the Adventure Museum it's kind of a tease of what's in there. We hope to be able to install video screens.
- As a reminder, the funds being utilized for this project are R&R funds (Repair and Renovation). This fund isn't comingled with your operation money. These funds were set aside separately to do this.

- **Staff Update**

As I mentioned in the email I sent you, Andrea Hanganu resigned and hopefully moved on to greater things. I want to thank Amy and Valerie who helped put these meetings together. It's a lot of work to pull our meetings off. We are looking into hiring a temporary person to transcribe our meeting minutes and also help out at the reception desk.

- As a reminder, that leaves us with positions we haven't filled. We have two education positions, two housekeeping positions and the Administrative Assistant position. This Commission has asked me not to fill any permanent positions right now.
- I hope we can work through our Task Force and look at how we are utilizing our human resources and make improvements/adjustments as needed.

Friends of
Elizabeth II, Inc.

Friends of *Elizabeth II*, Inc. Board Chair Tod Clissold provided the Friends Report, outlined as follows:

- Brief history of Friends organization and purpose.
- The Friends are a support group that tries to help the park anyway they can.
- Runs off an endowment. The policy is to give 80% of that return to RIFP each year.
- The Friends have contributed over \$6M to RIFP.
- We rely on membership, our investments and the Museum Store.
- Main objective is to protect it, to keep it growing, and to continue to build on itself each year.
- With times as they are now, the Commission and the Friends need to work together to try to continue the mission of the park and of the friends.
- Request that RIC members become Friends members (applications made available).

Friends of *Elizabeth II*, Inc. Operations Director Debbie Gibbs provided the Friends Report regarding the Guest House and Museum Store for the year, outlined as follows:

- Thank you Kim, Roanoke Island Commission and State of NC for allowing the Elizabeth II to sail to Washington. As one of her original missions is traveling to as many ports as she can reach to share her with school children and other communities. It's very important to the Friends that occur. We want to thank you for letting her go to Washington and allowing the volunteer crew to also have the hands-on training that can only occur when she sails.
- Museum Store.
 - Store Manager Mary Mason and some of her crew are in Washington with the ship. They set up a portable store there. They took items that mainly represent the Elizabeth II. They are down there the next two days sharing in the celebration of having the Elizabeth II there.
 - The Museum Store continues to be select in its items that are featured in the store; historically accurate and quality crafted. We look for pieces that best represent Roanoke Island Festival Park.
 - We strive for local and NC artists whenever possible and happy to meet the requests of our customers for *Made in the USA*.
 - In 2012 we have introduced 561 new items; 59 new vendors; 32 of the new items are Elizabeth II or park logo.
 - A display of items was shown to the RIC. A lot of the signature items are new.
 - 17 of our new vendors this year are representative of NC.
 - Our goal in the Museum Store is to provide the best customer service and shopping experience for our guests.
 - From shipping purchases back home; calling ahead for dinner reservations or even babysitting a park guest's pet bunny, we do whatever we can to make their visit to the park a good one.
 - Although our visitation in the Museum Store is down 18% from this time last year, we are happy to report our sales are up 4%. Fewer guests but more sales.
 - In order to determine who we are reaching as customers, in August we started tracking how many visitors shopping in the store had park stickers. To date, our findings show that 43% of the Museum Store's traffic did not have a park sticker. Our customers are shopping in the store without buying a ticket to the park. Therefore, we need to find ways to attract more of the ticketed visitors to come into our store and to continue to reach outside Roanoke Island Festival Park to help increase our total sales.

- We were thrilled with the prospect of being open for the Blue Grass Festival. We saw it as a great opportunity to have a captive audience for two days. We offered them a small discount if they had a wristband. The organizers helped us by announcing we were open. We stayed open late and it was a great success. We look forward to having more opportunities to participate in events like that in the future.
- In 2013 the store will have an online to shop. We will have select items available and with special artists available for a limited time. You will also be able to join and donate to the Friends of Elizabeth II online.
- Guest House.
 - For those not acquainted with the guest house, the Friends of Elizabeth II owns and operate a 30 room dormitory style facility. It was originally built specifically to house the performers from the NC School of the Arts and summer employees here at the park.
 - The mission of the housing has changed slightly. We support RIFP by providing affordable accommodations for the performance groups and complimentary housing when requested.
 - To help ensure the funds, and the availability of the housing, and pay for the operating maintenance and upkeep, the Friends Board has now expanded the mission on housing. We now offer it to outside groups that meet the qualifications of environmental, educational and cultural arts. They all have to be eligible for tax free considerations. It is not open to the general public. This is the second year we have been expanding the mission on housing. Each year it has grown.
 - Our gross revenue for this year will show an increase of about 11% with 62% of that coming from outside groups.
 - To date, we have provided housing for 39 organizations including 7 summer interns for various state organizations including the aquarium, Jeanette's Pier, NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources.
 - We continue to support the volunteer crew. They receive free housing whenever they need it.
 - This year Kim requested complimentary housing for the 440th band for July 4th and the boat company that is doing the repairs on the Elizabeth II this winter will also be staying at the house.
 - As far as the operating of the guest house, we are totally independent from the park. We use independent contractors to handle all maintenance and repairs. All the administrative and operating responsibility is handled by Debbie with some support from the store with key pickups and checking people in.
 - The guest house is over ten years old and we had a number of incidents this year. We are in the process of evaluating all the equipment to try and be a little more proactive in the maintenance and prevent some of the situations we had this year.
- Membership.
 - Membership of the Friends of Elizabeth II has been going through changes; just like the park.
 - 2010 was the largest membership.
 - We are going through the change of shifting the membership from a body that views their membership of what they get; to being a membership of support; being a part of this body to help support.
 - We did go through a decline. We are seeing growth this year; small that it is.
 - We are ahead of membership this year versus where we were last year.
 - We changed the membership from an annual membership to an anniversary date. That has been very positively received and I think that is helping as well.
 - Kim and I have talked about finding different ways to recognize our members without cost to the park.
 - It doesn't help either organization to have a membership that gets everything for free. That's not going to help Festival Park. We need a membership to this body that wants to see RIFP and the Elizabeth II exist for a long time.

- We have to work on our membership and that takes time.
- If you haven't seen the guest house and would like to see it; my office is there. I would be happy to give you a tour.
- Suggestions/Questions/Comments – Responses from Debbie Gibbs/Kim Sawyer
 - John Robbins: Have tickets for upcoming concerts available to membership first. *Working on this and other ideas, VIP section, etc. (Kim)*
 - John Robbins: Is gross revenue covering the annual expenses at this time? *Yes. This year it will. Last year there were a lot of expenses. We had to upgrade the fire alarm system. At this point this year we are in the black and I anticipate being in the black. (Debbie)*
 - Eddy Browning: Is there a capital project budget for housing, or as needed? *Friends have authorized up to \$20,000 of capital improvement if needed but is not necessarily set aside in a separate fund. We have to get to the point where we can set funds aside. (Debbie)*
 - Eddy Browning: Congratulations on your display and also for having the store open extra hours during the Blue Grass Festival.
 - Eddy Browning: Could you open the store during the winter months with our performances? *We certainly want that. One of the challenges of the store is our entrance is on this side and everybody enters the park on that side. It's a challenge getting people in the store. We have tested this. The evening performances hasn't shown any indication that it is something for us to do unless we do a concentrated; that it's always open and people begin to know that. It would be an investment for a year coordinating with all the performances I would anticipate to be able to see if it's worthwhile. One of the challenges for the store is the signage; its location. We face challenges with that and are working on ways to try and get more of the park visitors into the store. (Debbie)*
 - John Robbins: Is there any discussion of moving the ticketing sales into the Museum Store? *There has been a discussion about the space behind our ticket area. The footprint the store currently has is probably bigger than needed. We had a discussion with KaeLi of the History Center and with Jeff Crow of having the store back there. So, when you walk into the park you are right there together. When you leave the park you see the Museum Store. (Kim)*
 - Kim: My dream for the space where the Museum Store currently is would be to use it as classroom space; a space to have traveling exhibits. We need an opportunity to increase and change our educational piece. It's a nice tie-in for our locals and a nice opportunity for the Friends group. We can do sneak previews for the exhibits and that's another opportunity for them; and also another rental space for us.
 - Kim and Debbie would like to pursue the idea of the store moving to the space behind the ticket area. Possibly as a Phase 2 of our upgrade.
 - Debbie: The present store location presents challenges with location, storage, staffing, etc. I totally support Kim in pursuit of the idea of moving the store. I hope you all take a few minutes and walk down to the store and see what is in there.
 - Dale Petty: How many members are there? *236 Members. We have 50 volunteers (Kim)*
 - *About 1/3 of the volunteers are Friends members. (Debbie)*
 - Dale Petty: What were the gross sales for the Blue Grass Festival? *\$3,400. (Debbie)*
 - Debbie: Need to find ways to engage membership.

Heidi Leo joined the meeting at 10:30 AM.

Education Committee

Chairman Earl Willis reported the Education Committee is looking at ways to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Elizabeth II launching. Some of the ideas include:

- To have Dare County Board of Commissioners and the Town of Manteo commemorate the day by a great proclamation commemorating the Elizabeth II 30th Anniversary.

- Will also be developing a gallery exhibit for two months.

Boys Scouts and Girl Scouts find RIFP a delightful place they wish to spend time; particularly the Girl Scouts.

- Staff has developed a new patch with the inaugural date.

The number of volunteer hours that are done here is incredible; very impressive in the neighborhood of about 1,000. The staff continues to do a superb job in their education expertise of not only presenting the story of Roanoke Island, but also in the training of those people as well.

Roanoke Voyages Corridor Committee

Chairman John Robbins reported the committee has no action to bring before the full Commission today. A brief update on matters that we are working on follows.

- We are resolving an issue regarding a fee paid in a development at the north end of the island.
- We are continuing at Fountain's leadership, working with me, trying to get the utilities underground.
- We are going through the Roanoke Voyages Corridor Regulations and Standards document and looking at some of the inconsistencies there and working to bring some of those revisions back to the committee. We will bring them to the full Commission before any changes are made.
- Political signage will be removed shortly. As Perry indicated, there's a new state law that allows political signs to be located 3 feet within the highway right-of-ways. Our regulations only govern the signage outside of the right-of-way. There is some overlap and we will look at those issues.

Visual, Performing Arts & Film Committee

Chairman Eddy Browning reported the Visual, Performing Arts & Film Committee will be presenting the Calendar of Events planned for the park at the next RIC meeting. The RIC will be pleased with the caliber of entertainment and programs planned. Fisher Essenfeld has done a tremendous job.

Before the next meeting we have a Christmas event planned.

- The North Carolina A&T Choir will be performing at RIFP. Looking at a couple of different dates at this time. We will notify you by email as soon as we have a date set.

Facilities and Land Committee

Chairman Brent Lane commented as a new member of the Commission he appreciates the quality of the grounds keeping and on what a beautiful facility we have here. Items that came up in the meeting to be noted are as follows.

- Need some clarification on exactly what lands/facilities we have legal authority or responsibility for. There are those land issues that we are believed by others to be responsible for even though we do not have a legal responsibility.
- Would like to be provided at the next meeting with a simple inventory of what properties we have and what their status is.

Finance Committee

Chairman Ellen Newbold commented because you heard the Treasurer's report earlier we do not have much to report; other than what has already been reported. We have the fund but we don't have current information as to where we are at this point. That will be forthcoming at some point.

Robert Long suggested everyone take a tour of the site.

Old Business

Warren Judge brought up the subject of Buzzy Lane – RIC Comments follow.

- Warren Judge sent the RIC Chairman a letter requesting the commission get involved in

the issue of Buzzy Lane. Possibly lend some support in the county's effort in representing the three homeowners and residents on that property in their plight in the impending eviction by DCR from that property.

- Brent Lane: Unclear of what actions are possible or appropriate to take.
- Chairman Newbold: If the legislature did not give the money to Festival Park I don't think we would even be involved in this. We have, as I understand it, no authority over Buzzy Lane other than to receive the funds. We know that land was purchased by the Natural Heritage Trust and then Cultural Resources was the contract person to take care of it. I have been informed that we have no legal authority to do anything about the situation. I understand your plight and what you are trying to do. But, at this point, I do not see where we can do anything. I would like to ask our General Counsel if he would like to comment.
- Grayson Kelley: I certainly support what you said. It's a relative tenuous connection. The only reference in your statute, or anywhere else, is basically you get the rent money. From the human interest point of view many of you may think I would like to help my neighbor; weigh in some way. From a legal perspective you don't have much involvement in this except get the rent money.
- Warren Judge: I certainly respect the fact there might not be legal standing. This is going to come down to a political issue or a public perception issue. Actually, what it really is, it's a human issue. These people's lives have been turned upside down by actions out of their control. Maybe this commission just simply weighs in. There are three positions. 1. Support the people of Buzzy Lane; 2. Don't support the people of Buzzy Lane or 3. We don't support anything.
- Dr. Kevin Cherry: I'm asking the help of the individual members of this commission if there's someone who can help us find a place for these folks to go that would be appropriate for them, and also to abide by the state's contract that we entered into. We have been trying to do the right thing and help those individuals for at least several years.

John Robbins asked what is the status of the Audit.

- Kim responded it is ongoing. They have been to the site one time.

New Business 2013 Meeting Dates

Chairman Newbold reported that the 2013 meeting dates were previously distributed (filed as an attachment in the Official Report book).

Motion

Earl Willis made a motion that the Commission approves the proposed 2013 meeting dates. The motion was second by Warren Judge.

Vote

Call for a vote. Passed unanimously.

Notices and Announcements

RIFP will be receiving the Roanoke Island Garden Club Award for the Business Garden of the Season.

The next Roanoke Island Commission Committee meetings will be Friday, January 25, 2013 at 9:00 AM.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned on motion by Fountain Odom and second by Zene Fearing at 11:25 AM.

Minutes submitted by: Maureen Nelson, Administrative Assistant

Upon a vote by the Roanoke Island Commission, approved by:

Angel Khoury, Secretary, Roanoke Island Commission

